

*PRIMITIVE TRADITION RECOGNISED IN HOLY
SCRIPTURE:*

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER,

AT THE VISITATION

OF THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND

WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE,

SEPTEMBER 27, 1836.

BY THE

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TO THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND

WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WINTON ;

AND TO THE REVEREND THE CLERGY OF THE DEANERIES MEETING

AT WINCHESTER ;

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED :

HAVING BEEN PREACHED BEFORE THEM,

AND BEING NOW PUBLISHED IN DEFERENCE TO THEIR EXPRESSED

WISH

OF EXAMINING AT THEIR LEISURE THE STATEMENTS

THEREIN CONTAINED.

A
S E R M O N,
8c.

2 TIM. i. 14.

THAT GOOD THING WHICH WAS COMMITTED UNTO THEE KEEP BY THE
HOLY GHOST WHICH DWELLETH IN US.

ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΗΝ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗΝ ΦΥΛΑΞΟΝ, ΔΙΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ
'ΑΓΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΝΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΟΣ 'ΕΝ 'ΗΜΙΝ.

WHATEVER men may severally anticipate concerning the final issue of the many anxious discussions which at present occupy the Catholic Church in England, all, I suppose, must feel that for the time they occasion a great perplexity and doubtfulness of mind. We are beset on every side (the clergy more especially) with conflicting difficulties, and temptations to unworthy compromise. That man must be either very confident in the accuracy of his own views, or very highly favoured in respect of clearness of judgment, or very successful in keeping himself out of the way of all controversy, who has not repeatedly found himself at a loss, within the last seven years, on such points as the following :—What are the limits of the civil power in ecclesiastical matters, and how far we may venture in the way of submission without

sacrifice of church principle : how the freedom of the Anglican church may be vindicated against the exorbitant claims of Rome, and yet no disparagement ensue of the authority inherent in the Catholic Apostolical Church : again, how the method of voluntary combination, so generally resorted to in our days for important ecclesiastical objects, may be reconciled with entire deference to episcopal prerogative ; how CHRIST's ministers may " study to be quiet," and yet do their duty as watchmen, and not let their people slumber in the midst of danger ; and how they may best unite unwearied meekness in judging, and active Christian love, with strict reserve and timely censure towards every one that walketh disorderly. The time was, not long since, when many of these points appeared to most of us as mere historical curiosities. We felt, perhaps, that they were, abstractedly, of grave importance, but we thanked God that our lot was cast in times which required not of us, as pastors and stewards in CHRIST's service, any distinct consideration and settled views concerning them. Now things are different : the course of God's providence has permitted the enemies or prompted the defenders of the Church to lay bare her very foundations ; and it has become imperative on us all, in discharge of our ordination vows, to make up our minds as well as we can, and endeavour to see our own way, on

points which we should gladly, if we might, have taken on trust.

It cannot be safe to shrink from this duty, and say, as many seem inclined to do, that we could bear persecution itself better than the perplexity of considering such things, or the responsibility of deciding for ourselves, and agitating others, concerning them. We have put our hand to the plough, and we must not—we dare not—look back. It is too late for sworn and ordained priests and ministers in the Church of God to dream of drawing back from responsibility. The nature of the case contradicts the very thought. For what responsibility can be more fearful than *his*, who indolently and unthinkingly gives his assent to changes, which, for aught he knows, may prove not only ruinous in the event, but in theory and principle also opposed to the truths and ordinances wherewith CHRIST has put him in trust? Dismissing, therefore, as a snare of our great enemy, the false comfort which many of us, perhaps, are too much inclined to take to ourselves, from a notion that by not interfering we keep ourselves irresponsible, let us see whether the unprejudiced study of those parts of Scripture, which are obviously best suited to our case, may not supply us with a better and more genuine comfort, by furnishing some one clear and unquestionable rule, which may go a good way in guiding us rightly,

independent of all results : showing us where our chief responsibility lies, and to which, among interests and duties apparently conflicting, we are bound always to give the preference.

It is natural, in such an inquiry, to turn immediately to the two Epistles to Timothy, especially the last. For, undoubtedly, it must have been to that holy Bishop a time of very great perplexity, when his Guide and Father in the faith was on the eve of departing from him : the heretics also, as appears from many passages, already beginning to infest the Asiatic churches, according to St. Paul's own prophecy. It appears from the opening of the second Epistle, that when all doubt was taken away as to St. Paul's approaching martyrdom, his affectionate disciple was in danger of being overwhelmed by his sorrow for so great a loss, joined to his sense of the heavy burden which would be laid on himself, now left comparatively alone. To these two feelings in the breast of Timothy the Apostle in his farewell letter addresses himself : remembering, as he says ¹, the tears which Timothy had shed, perhaps when they had last parted from each other, and longing the more for the satisfaction of seeing him again. In the mean time, there are two words, which he seems studiously to repeat again and again, that he may leave them

¹ Ch. ii. 4.

sounding, as it were, in his disciple's ears, for remembrancers of the two duties most pressing at the moment: ΚΑΚΟΠΑΘΗΣΟΝ, and ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗ: "endure hardness," and "keep that committed to thy charge."

First, with reference to the dejection of mind, by which Timothy was then suffering, "endure hardness," says the Apostle¹, "as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST:" "Endure² affliction, make full proof of thy ministry;" "be thou³ partaker of the affliction of the Gospel according to the power of God." The drift of all which warnings is the same as where he reminds the Thessalonians⁴, "When we were "with you, we told you that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." Affliction, hardness, trial, tribulation, is the very atmosphere of the gospel ministry; we never had cause to expect any thing else. "Do not, therefore," (so the Apostle implies,) "do not shrink thus over- "tenderly from the thought of losing me, which, "you now see, comes into your ordained portion of "trouble." "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our LORD, nor of me his prisoner;" do not carry your affectionate regret so far as almost to cause an appearance of defective faith. Do not take it to heart so very bitterly, as if you in some sort regretted your Christian engagement, finding so much to be

¹ Ch. ii. 3.

² Ch. iv. 5.

³ Ch. i. 8.

⁴ 1 Thess. iii. 4.

borne beyond your expectation ; as if you were sorry that you had put so much confidence in me. But, instead of vain regret, take comfort in doing your duty ; resort to that fountain of supernatural grace, which was opened for you when you were consecrated to be an Apostle. “ Remember that
 “ thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by
 “ the imposition of my hands. For the SPIRIT
 “ which we both of us then received was not a
 “ spirit of fear,” of unworthy sadness and cowardice ; excessive, unreasonable dejection can be no fruit of it. Such were the tender expostulations and chidings of St. Paul, well beseeeming the kindest and most thoughtful of parents recalling his own son in the faith to a manly firmness. Then, in the temper of a noble and true soldier, he propounds his own example, teaches his younger comrade the way of consolation, which he found most effectual for himself. “ Because I am ordained a herald and
 “ apostle and teacher, I suffer these things : but I
 “ am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have
 “ believed, and am persuaded that he is able to
 “ keep that which I have committed unto him
 “ against that day.” And elsewhere¹, “ I suffer evil,
 “ as a malefactor, even unto bonds, but the word of
 “ God is not bound.” What can be more animating, what more affecting, than to witness a person like

¹ Ch. ii. 9.

St. Paul, full of conscious energy, power, and usefulness, thus devoutly reconciling himself to that which, humanly speaking, would have seemed the most untimely interruption of his labours? It is clear, I think, that even St. Paul found this a severe struggle; but he cheers himself, as in his former imprisonment; when he wrote to the Philippians, that the taunts of his enemies on his confinement had turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, causing his bonds in CHRIST to be spoken of in the palace of the Cæsars, and in all places: so that even those who in speaking of his sufferings meant nothing but envy and strife, did in a manner preach CHRIST, *i. e.* make His Gospel known, and draw popular attention to His Name¹. Such I take to be the true meaning of that often alleged text; far from conveying the encouragement, which some think they find in it, to irregular and schismatical efforts, but fraught with abundant consolation for those, who being anxious for the Church in evil times, feel themselves precluded from active exertions on her behalf. They can always say to themselves, “The Word of God is not bound: He can make even envy and strife involuntary heralds of His cause.” Their fidelity in acting while they could is rewarded with the assurance of a strong faith, that when *their* work is over, God’s eternal and

glorious work is still in progress, although they cannot see how.

But we dare not take this comfort to ourselves,—we dare not, in those instances where we find the Church bound and fettered, mitigate our regret by exulting remembrance of the expansive inherent force of divine truth,—except we be really, in some tolerable measure, doing our best for her, so far as we are at liberty. The sense of our own responsibility, and of our faithfulness to it, must lie at the root of all true and solid consolation. To this, therefore, as the one thing needful, both for the cause and for himself, the Apostle most emphatically bespeaks his disciple's attention. He loses no opportunity of reminding him of the *παρακατάθεκη*, the charge, trust, deposit, which had been left jointly in both their hands, and in the hands of all commissioned as they were. Observe how naturally, with what dexterity of affection, he passes from the mention of his own trust to that of the same trust as committed to Timothy. “I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit, *τὴν παρακατάθεκην μου*, against that day. Hold fast the form,” or “abide by the pattern or standard, of wholesome words which thou hast heard from me, by faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS. That good thing committed unto thee” (literally, the good and noble deposit) “keep, by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth

“in us. ”Surely these are words in which we ourselves are concerned, as deeply as he was, to whom they were first written. We are so far in Timothy’s case, that we are full of sorrow and perplexity at the condition in which we find the Church and Body of CHRIST JESUS : we would fain lay hold of Timothy’s and St. Paul’s consolation : let us first see to it, that we neglect not the warning given. To the companion of Apostles that warning was plain and simple. The duty imposed on him, paramount to all others, was simply to keep safe and entire a certain trust committed to his charge ; to that one vital object all considerations of present expediency, temporal comfort, visible, apparent edification, were to give way. What that treasure was, Timothy could not be ignorant ; nor yet could he be doubtful as to the celestial aid, by which, if not wanting to himself, he would surely be enabled to preserve it. But in both respects some consideration is requisite, before we of this day can fully apply the case to ourselves. It is not obvious at first sight, what this trust or treasure was : nor (of course) whether we are partakers of it : and even supposing those points settled, there might still remain a doubt, whether we have the same help for the faithful discharge of our trust, the HOLY GHOST dwelling in us. The consideration of these points in their order may not unfitly employ us on the present occasion.

1. And, first, as to the exact notion which we are to attach to the word *παρακαταθήκη*, “trust or deposit,” in this place: I observe that the very use of so general a word with the article implies that it had been by that time received among Christians as a term (if one may so speak) of their own, a part of the vocabulary of the holy Catholic Church. A diligent eye may detect, in St. Paul’s Epistles, many traces of the like use of language: current sayings, or senses of words, or formulæ, which the Apostle only just alludes to, as well known to all his readers. For instance, the expression, “This is a faithful saying,” which occurs repeatedly in these later Epistles, indicates, in all probability, so many Christian proverbs, familiar in the mouths of that generation of believers. Thus, in the first Epistle to Timothy, we have, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men “to be received, that ‘CHRIST JESUS came into “the world to save sinners¹:’ This is a faithful “saying, ‘If a man desire the office of a bishop, “he desireth a good work²:’ This is a faithful “saying, ‘That therefore we both labour and “suffer reproof, because we trust in the living “God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially “of them that believe³.’” In the second Epistle⁴, “It is a faithful saying, ‘If we be dead with “Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer,

¹ Ch. i. 15.² Ch. iii. 1.³ Ch. iv. 10.⁴ Ch. ii. 11.

“ we shall also reign with Him ; if we deny Him, “ He also will deny us.’ ” And to Titus, after a brief summary of the gospel way of salvation, which by the exact rhythm and order of its members might almost appear to be part of a primitive hymn ¹, St. Paul adds the same clause, “ Faithful is the saying.” From all which I argue, that there was a certain set of “ sayings ” current among the Christians of that time, to which any allusion or appeal, however brief, would be presently understood. Nor will it be hard to find examples of single words, which had evidently acquired by that time a Christian sense ; so that, even when used absolutely, they could only be taken by Christians in a particular relation : such words, I mean, as τὸ μυστήριον, for “ the scheme of “ supernatural truth revealed in the Gospel, and “ more especially in the doctrine of our LORD’s incarnation ;” ὁ ἐχθρὸς, for “ the evil spirit ;” ἡ ὁδοῦς, for “ the profession of Christianity.” These, and other examples which might be mentioned, make it surely not incredible, that ἡ παρακαταθήκη, “ the deposit, trust, or charge,” conveyed to Christian ears in those days a peculiar and definite, I had almost said a technical, meaning.

Now both this word and its kindred term, ἡ ἐντολὴ, “ the commandment,” are mentioned in connection with errors to be avoided in *doctrine*.

¹ See Note (B) in the Appendix.

Thus, Timothy is warned¹ to “keep the deposit, “avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” Again, on mention made of the good confession, made by the same Timothy before many witnesses, at the time of his first calling to eternal life,—which “good confession” can only mean the Apostles’ Creed, or some corresponding formula, recited at baptism,—St. Paul proceeds thus: “I exhort thee before GOD and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep *the commandment* without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” Does not this appear as if “the confession” in the former verse had suggested the caution about “the commandment” or “commission” in the latter? and if so, what more probable than that “the commission” means the same treasure of doctrine which we know to have been embodied in the Confession or Creed?

This interpretation of the noun παρακαταθήκη, “deposit,” is confirmed by the repeated use of the kindred verb, παρατίθεσθαι, “to entrust, or commit,” in reference to Christian doctrine. For example, “This *commandment* I *commit* unto thee, son Timothy, that thou mightest charge some that they *preach no other doctrine*².” Elsewhere (a passage which seems to me sufficient alone to warrant the

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

² 1 Tim. i. 18. 3.

proposed interpretation) Timothy is instructed concerning the things which he had heard from St. Paul “before many witnesses,” *i. e.* as it should seem, at a kind of public charge at his ordination:—these he is directed to commit or entrust “to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also¹.” Ability to *teach* is the thing required: it is plain, therefore, that the trust related principally to *doctrine*².

Further, it will be observed that the phrase of the Apostle is absolute: *the* trust, not *your* trust; the great trust of all, in which whosoever participates has reason to consider himself especially responsible to the great Judge of heaven and earth. And it is implied that the charge of St. Paul and that of Timothy were one and the same. “Keep the good deposit,” says the Apostle, “by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us.” Now, what St. Paul’s trust was, the trust uppermost in his heart, he himself teaches, exclaiming, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*³.” He does not say, “I have kept the flock, I have kept those left in my charge;” but, “I have kept the *faith*, the *truth* of CHRIST, the *doctrine* of the Gospel. I have watched it, and preserved it entire.” Great as

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² See Note (C) in the Appendix.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

was the holy Apostle's anxiety for the souls which God had put under his care, his anxiety for the system of CHRIST, the kingdom of heaven, did at that moment apparently engross him more entirely. And it is clearly probable, that what he felt himself to be the main care, the chief trust of all, that he would recommend to his disciple in such words as those of the text, "That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep;" especially considering that those words immediately follow a caution which can only relate to doctrinal formulæ: "Hold fast," as a model for thyself, "the form of sound words," the course of healthful, orthodox interpretations and doctrines, "which thou hast heard of me." That form of sound words, is it not obviously the same with the good deposit in the next verse?

Thus the context leads to the same exposition which, as we have seen, the parallel passages suggest—an exposition ratified also by the general consent of Christian antiquity. The good deposit is commonly understood by the Fathers to mean the *truths* committed by St. Paul to Timothy. Thus, in the paraphrase ascribed to St. Jerome¹:

¹ "Commendatum a nobis servandum tibi fidei depositum custodi. Quod a me non audisti, nec ab angelo si dicatur, libenter admittas." T. ix. 388. ed. Froben. Basil.

“ Watch over the deposit of the faith, entrusted to thy keeping by us. What thou hast not heard of me, though it were spoken by an angel, receive it not willingly.” And a venerable father of the third century, Hippolytus, having quoted the expressions, “ O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy charge,” and, “ The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men,” remarks¹ that “ The blessed Apostle used religious “ care in delivering these truths, which were “ easily accessible to all.” And Vincent of Lerins²: “ Keep,” says the Apostle, “ that which is committed to thy charge: *the Catholic faith,*

¹ “Ορα δὲ μὴ εἰς ἀπίστους καὶ βλασφήμους γλώσσας ἐγκαταθῇ ταῦτα· κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχ ὁ τυχόν· μετάδος δὲ εὐλαβέσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, τοῖς ἐθέλουσιν ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως μετὰ φόβον ζῆν· οὐ γὰρ μάτην ὁ μακάριος Ἀπόστολος παραινῶν Τιμοθέῳ λέγει· ὦ Τιμόθεε, τὴν παρακαταθήκην φύλαξον ἐκτρεπόμενος, κ. τ. λ. Καὶ πάλιν . . . Ἄ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν παρακλησέων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, κ. τ. λ. Εἰ οὖν ὁ μακάριος μετ’ εὐλαβείας παρεδίδου ταῦτα, ἅπερ ἅπασι εὐγνωστα ἦν, βλέπων τῷ Πνεύματι, ὅτι οὐ πάντων ἦν ἡ πίστις· πόσῃ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν, εἰ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγια μεταδώσομεν βεβήλοις καὶ ἀναξίοις ἀνδράσιν; Dem. de Christo et Antichristo, ap. Biblioth. Patrum, Gallandi, t. ii. p. 418.

² Commonit. c. xxii. “ Quid est *depositum*? id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti; rem non ingenii, sed doctrinæ; non usurpationis privatæ, sed publicæ traditionis; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolatam; in qua non auctor debes esse, sed custos; non institutor, sed sectator; non ducens, sed sequens. ‘*Depositum,*’ inquit, ‘*custodi;*’ *catholicæ fidei talentum* inviolatum illibatumque conserva.”

as a talent, preserve thou inviolate and unalloyed."

Upon the whole, we may assume with some confidence that the good thing left in Timothy's charge, thus absolutely to be kept at all events, was the treasure of apostolical doctrines and church rules : the rules and doctrines which made up the charter of CHRIST's kingdom.

2. The next question to be settled is, whether the precept in the text apply literally to us : *i. e.* in other words, whether we have yet in our possession the identical deposit which St. Paul left with Timothy. For, *if* we have, mere natural piety would teach us to reverence and guard it as he was required to do.

Some will reply to this question at once, We have the Holy Scriptures, and we know for certain that they contain all that is important in Timothy's trust. These would resolve the custody of the good deposit into the simple duty of preserving the Scriptures incorrupt, and maintaining them in their due estimation among Christians. Undoubtedly this would be in some respects the least troublesome, if it could be proved the most correct and dutiful way. But can it be so proved ?

We are naturally, if not reasonably, jealous of the word Tradition, associated as it is in our minds with the undue claims and pernicious errors of

Rome. Yet must it not be owned, on fair consideration, that Timothy's deposit did comprise matter, independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural? that it contained, besides the substance of Christian doctrine, a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals; and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship; of which, whatever portion we can prove to be still remaining, ought to be religiously guarded by us, even for the same reason that we reverence and retain that which is more properly scriptural, both being portions of the same divine treasure.

To these conclusions we are led by the consideration, first, that the truths and rules committed to Timothy's charge were at the time almost or wholly unwritten. This is clear from the very date of the Epistles which mention that charge: the latest of which must have been composed many years before St. John's gospel, and in the first of them the deposit in question is spoken of, not as an incomplete thing on its progress towards perfection, but as something so wholly sufficient, so unexceptionably accurate, as to require nothing but fidelity in its transmitters¹. The holy writings themselves intimate, that the

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 14, 20.

persons to whom they were addressed were in possession of a body of truth and duty, totally distinct from themselves and independent of them. Timothy, for instance, a few verses after the text, is enjoined to take measures for the transmission, not of holy Scripture, but of the things which he had heard of St. Paul among many witnesses¹. The Thessalonians had been exhorted to hold the traditions which they had received, whether by word or apostolical letter². They could not be exhorted to hold the Christian Scriptures, since at that time in all probability no Christian Scriptures yet existed, except perhaps St. Matthew's gospel. Much later we find St. Peter declaring to the whole body of Oriental Christians, that in neither of his Epistles did he profess to reveal to them any new truth or duty, but to stir up their minds by way of remembrance of the commandment of the Apostles of the LORD and SAVIOUR³. St. John refers believers, for a standard of doctrine, to the word which they had heard from the beginning⁴, and intimates that it was sufficient for their Christian communion if that word abode in them. If the Word, the Commandment, the Tradition, which the latest of these holy writers severally commend in these and similar passages, meant only or chiefly the Scriptures before written, would

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² 2 Thess. ii. 15.

³ 2 S. Pet. iii. 1.

⁴ 1 S. John ii. 24.

there not appear a more significant mention of those Scriptures ; something nearer the tone of our own divines, when they are delivering precepts on the Rule of Faith ? As it is, the phraseology of the Epistles exactly concurs with what we should be led to expect : that the Church would be already in possession of the substance of saving Truth, in a sufficiently systematic form, by the sole teaching of the Apostles. As long as that teaching itself, or the accurate recollection of it, remained in the world, it must have constituted a standard or measure of Christian knowledge, though it had never seemed good to the Almighty to confer on us the additional boon of the books of the New Testament.

It can hardly be necessary to remind this audience, that these scattered notices are abundantly confirmed by the direct and formal testimony of the ecclesiastical writers of the age immediately following the Apostles. As often as Tertullian and Irenæus have false teachers to reprove, or unevangelical corruptions to expose, do they not refer to the tradition of the whole Church, as to something independent of the written word, and sufficient at that time to refute heresy, even alone ? Do they not employ Church tradition as parallel to Scripture, not as derived from it ? and consequently as fixing the interpretation of disputed texts, not simply by the judgment of the Church,

but by authority of that HOLY SPIRIT which inspired the oral teaching itself, of which such tradition is the record. Their practice is throughout in accordance with the following sentence of Irenæus¹:—"We ought not to be still seeking among others for the truth, which it is easy to receive from the Church; since therein, as in a rich depository, the Apostles did most abundantly lodge all things appertaining to the truth: so that whoever will, may receive from her the waters of life. For the Church is the entrance to life: all the rest are but thieves and robbers. . . . And what if the Apostles themselves had left us no Scriptures? Ought we not to follow the course of tradition, such as they delivered it to those whom they entrusted with the Churches? Which rule is followed by many nations of the barbarians, those I mean who believe in Christ, without paper or ink, having salvation written in their hearts by the SPIRIT, and diligently keeping the old tradition." Then having recited the substance of the Apostles' Creed as a specimen of that tradition, he adds, "This faith those who without letters have believed, in respect of our language are indeed barbarians, but in respect of their views, habits, and conversation, have attained by faith a very high measure of illumination, and please God,

¹ See Note (D) in Appendix.

walking in all justice, chastity, and wisdom. And if any one should relate to them in their own languages the new inventions of the heretics, they would presently shut their ears and escape as far as possible, not enduring so much as to hear the profane discourse." This noble passage I the rather quote, because it shews that the case which was just now put, of persons left without the Scriptures to depend on tradition alone, is not a mere dream of imagination, but at that time actually existed in some parts of the Christian world. There were instances, it seems, known to Irenæus, of true believers who did not as yet know any thing of the New Testament, yet were able to stop the mouths of heretics by merely avouching the ancient apostolical tradition. As was the condition, duty, and privileges, of those faithful and simple men, such would have been those of the whole Christian world, had the inspired Scriptures either remained unwritten, or perished with so many other monuments of antiquity. Faith in those divine truths with which the Church was originally entrusted would still have been required at the hands of Christian men; but the task of ascertaining those truths would have been far harder and more delicate. Now that it has pleased our gracious God to bestow on us, over and above, the use of His written word, can we be justified in slighting the original gift, on pretence

of being able to do without it? Surely, in whatever respect any tradition is really apostolical, to think lightly of it must be the same *kind* of sin, as if those unlearned and remote Christians, of whom Irenæus speaks, had thought lightly of the New Testament when it came to be propounded to them. We see at once in what manner sincere reverence for God's truth would lead them to treat the portions of His *written* word, as they were brought successively under their notice. If we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves that His *unwritten* word, if it can be any how authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us; and for exactly the same reason: *because it is His word.*

But, further: the fact is clearly demonstrable from Scripture, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served as a test even for the Apostles' own writings. Nothing was to be read, as canonical, except it agreed with the faith delivered once for all to the first generation of the saints. The directions of St. Paul on this subject are perfectly clear, and without reserve. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." And St. John, in his Epistles, strikes continually on the same chord. Mark his anxiety to justify his own teaching from any sus-

picion of novelty or originality : “ Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning.” He writes to them as to persons knowing the truth ; knowing all things ; not needing that any man teach them. He forbids their acquiescing without trial in any pretensions to spiritual gifts : he would have the spirits tried, whether they be of God, whatever their claim to be confirmed even by miracle ; and the test or touchstone which he recommends is, agreement with the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. “ Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is of GOD ; and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is not of GOD¹.” And his second Epistle speaks just the same language : “ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of CHRIST, hath not GOD ; he that abideth in the doctrine of CHRIST, he hath both the FATHER and the SON².”

I do not see how we can be wrong in inferring, from these and similar passages, that the faith once for all delivered to the saints, in other words, Apostolical Tradition, was divinely appointed in the Church as the touchstone of canonical Scrip-

¹ S. John ii. 7, 20, 21, 27 ; iv. 1, 3.

² 2 S. John 9.

ture itself. No writing, however plausible the appearance of its having come from the Apostles, was to be accepted as theirs, if it taught any other doctrine than what they at first delivered : rather both it and its writers were to be anathema.

This use of Apostolical Tradition may well correct the presumptuous irreverence of disparaging the Fathers under plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a tradition so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the Church, as to be made the standard and rule of His own divine Scriptures. The very writings of the Apostles were to be first tried by it, before they could be incorporated into the canon. Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the tradition of the Apostles ; the despisers, therefore, of that tradition take part, inadvertently or profanely, with the despisers of the Scripture itself.

On the other hand, it is no less evident that Scripture, being once ascertained, became in its turn a test for every thing claiming to be of Apostolical Tradition. But on this part of the subject there is the less occasion to dwell, it being, I suppose, allowed on all hands. Only it may be well to notice a distinction not always sufficiently kept in view by modern writers on the rule of faith ; viz. that whereas Scripture was from the beginning appealed to, of course, as a test of *positive* truth, it could only then be appealed to

negatively, i. e. its silence could then only be quoted as excluding any point from the list of truths necessary to salvation, when itself had attained a certain degree of completeness. And this perhaps may be one reason why the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is nowhere expressly affirmed in Scripture itself¹. The character which our Article justly assigns to the Bible, of “so containing all things necessary to salvation, that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation :”—this character the Bible could not, from the very force of the terms, acquire, until a sufficient portion of its contents had appeared, to include in one place or another every one of such fundamentals. Nor are we sure of this condition having been fulfilled until the appearance of St. John’s Gospel and first Epistle, the latest, probably, of those canonical Scriptures of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. This consideration may serve to account for the comparative rareness of quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the first century ; in the Epistle of St. Clement, for instance, who, while he produces in almost every paragraph some testimony

¹ See note (E) in Appendix.

from the Jewish Scriptures, has only three or four references to the New Testament: where such might be expected, he rather uses to remind men of “the depths of divine knowledge, which they had looked into¹ ;” of “the immortal knowledge, whereof they had tasted² ;” and of the apostolical examples, which they had seen. Whereas the writers of the following age, Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest, add to the argument from tradition, on which in itself they lay as much stress as St. Clement, authorities and arguments from the New Testament, much in the manner of controversialists of our own time.

From all this I gather, that in the interval between Clement and Ignatius on the one hand, Irenæus and Tertullian on the other, the canon of the New Testament had first become fixed and notorious, and then the fact had been observed, which is stated in our Article: That every fundamental point of doctrine is contained in the unquestioned books of that canon, taken along with the Hebrew Scriptures. And this observation, being once made, would of course immediately suggest that golden rule, not of the Anglican only, but of the Catholic Church; That nothing is to be insisted on as a point of faith necessary to salvation, but what is contained in, or

¹ c. 40.

² c. 36.

may be proved by, canonical Scripture. At any rate, it is unquestionable that by the time of Irenæus, *i.e.* towards the end of the second century, the fact had been universally recognized, and the maxim thoroughly grounded and incorporated into the system of the Catholic Church ¹.

Reserving thus the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith, we may now, I think, venture to assume, from the nature of the case, the incidental testimony of Scripture, and the direct assertions of the Fathers, that it was an unwritten system which the holy writers spoke of, when they so earnestly recommended the deposit, the commandment, the word heard from the beginning, to the reverential care both of pastors and of all Christian people.

Will it be said, "This is no concern of ours; it may be true in fact, but it yields no practical result; the traditionary system, whatever it was, having long ago passed away, except so far as it has been preserved in inspired writings"? This may be stated, and often is so, but can hardly be proved.

For in the first place, as long as it is only doubtful whether any statement or precept is part of the Apostolic system or no, so long a mind imbued with true devotion will treat that state-

¹ See Appendix, Note (F).

ment or precept with reverence, will not rudely reject or scorn it, lest he refuse to entertain an angel unawares. So long, the mere fact of its not being contained in Scripture cannot be felt as a justification for casting it aside, any more than we should venture to disparage it on account of its not being revealed in any particular *book* of Scripture, which we might happen to value above the rest. Although not in Scripture, it may yet be a part of *their* rule, concerning whom the SON of GOD has declared, “He that heareth you, heareth ME; and he that despiseth you, despiseth ME.”

But in truth it may be proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the Church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the Apostles in Church government; the threefold order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant Baptism; and, above all, the Catholic doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed. All these, however surely confirmed from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive, unwritten system, of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask, how we ascertain them; we answer, By application of the well-known rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*: Anti-

quity, Universality, Catholicity : tests similar to those which jurists are used to apply to the common or unwritten laws of any realm. If a maxim or custom can be traced back to a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary ; if it pervade all the different courts, established in different provinces for the administration of justice ; and, thirdly, if it be generally acknowledged in such sort, that contrary decisions have been disallowed and held invalid : then, whatever the exceptions to it may be, it is presumed to be part and parcel of our common law. On principles exactly analogous, the Church practices and rules above mentioned, and several others, ought, we contend, apart from all Scripture evidence, to be received as traditionary or common laws ecclesiastical. They who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance ; who plead against it the uncertainty of history, the loss or probable corruption of records, the exceptions, deviations, interruptions which have occurred through the temporary prevalence of tyranny, heresy, or schism ; must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this, and of most other old countries.

It is not, therefore, antecedently impossible that a system of tradition, subsidiary to the Scriptures, might yet exist in the commonwealth or city of

GOD. The rest is matter of investigation in each case, whether any given rule, interpretation, or custom, be traditionary in the required sense. But it will not be going too far into particulars, and may help to the understanding and application of the whole argument, if I point out three distinct fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to tradition, such as has been described.

The first is, the *System and Arrangement of fundamental Articles*, so far as they have come down to us systematic and arranged. We, that is, all of the Anglican Church who have had any regular training in theology, are so early taught to trace the Creed in the Scriptures, and to refer at once certain portions of both Testaments to certain high mysteries of the Catholic faith, that it commonly appears to ourselves as though we had learned those mysteries directly from the Scriptures. But there are few, surely, who on careful recollection would not be compelled to acknowledge that the Creed, or some corresponding catechetical instruction, had prepossessed them with these truths, before ever they thought of proving them from Holy Writ. I need hardly remind you of the unquestioned historical fact, that the very Nicene Creed itself, to which perhaps of all *formulæ* we are most indebted for our

sound belief in the proper divinity of the Son of God—even this Creed had its origin, not from Scripture, but from tradition. The three hundred Bishops who joined in its promulgation did not profess to have collected it out of the Bible, but simply to express the faith which each of them had found in the Church which he represented, received by tradition from the Apostles¹. Nor is this any disparagement to Scripture, nor need it excite any alarm for the great fundamental verity itself, which the Creed was meant to assert; any more than it would disparage the works of God, or shake the foundation of our faith in natural religion, were one to affirm that the power and Godhead of the Creator, although unquestionably proveable from the things which are made, would yet have remained unknown to the mass of mankind, but for primitive tradition, or subsequent revelation of it.

The second great subject, on which most of us are unconsciously indebted to the ancient Catholic tradition, is the *Interpretation of Scripture*, especially those parts of it which less obviously relate to the mysteries of the Gospel. Catholic tradition bears upon Scripture interpretation, not only indirectly, by supplying, as just now stated, certain great landmarks of apostolical doctrine, conform-

¹ See Appendix, Note (G).

ably to which the written statements are all to be interpreted ; but also, in numerous cases, directly ; setting the Church's seal, as it were, upon one among many possible expositions of particular passages. For example : how else could we know, with tolerable certainty, that Melchizedek's feast is a type of the blessed Eucharist¹ ? or that the book of Canticles is an allegory, representing the mystical union betwixt CHRIST and his Church² ? or that Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is a Name of the second Person in the Most Holy Trinity³ ? All which interpretations, the moment they are heard, approve themselves to an unprejudiced mind, and must in all likelihood have come spontaneously into many readers' thoughts. But it may be questioned whether we could ever

¹ For this, see S. Cyprian, Ep. 63, p. 149, ed. Fell ; S. Augustin, de Civ. Dei, xviii. 20 ; S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellam. t. i. p. 123, ed. Frob. Basil. These, with the distinct acknowledgment in the ancient Roman Liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western Churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom (on 14 Genesis) clearly implies the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their comparative silence on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation.

² In this I believe all the Fathers who quote that divine Book (and most of them do so often) are agreed.

³ The disputes on the text, Proverbs viii. 22, at the Nicene Council, are sufficient to prove agreement on this point. It is well known that the Arians alleged it, as it stands in the Septuagint, (ὁ Κύριος ἔκτισέ με), as a proof of the Son's inferiority. The Catholics never disputed the application of the text to our LORD, but denied the deduction from it.

have arrived at more than a plausible conjecture regarding them, but for the constant agreement of the early Church, taking notice every where, in these and the like instances, of the manner in which the Old Testament was divinely accommodated to the wonders of CHRIST's religion.

The third great field of apostolical tradition lies among *practical* matters, the *Discipline, Formularies, and Rites* of the Church of CHRIST: in regard of which, reason tells us that the Church Apostolical must ~~here~~ have had *some* method and system; yet it is evident to the very eye that the New Testament exhibits no such system in form, but only fragments and other indications of one in full operation at the time, and well known to those for whom the Apostles were writing. These fragments being found to coincide with similar but more copious indications in later Church records; consideration also being had of the religious reverence wherewith in those ages every thing primitive was regarded, and of the charitable jealousy of the Churches, watching each other for the purpose of remonstrating against unwarrantable deviations; we need not fear to accept in its fulness, on all such matters, the well-known rule of St. Augustin, which I give in the words of Hooker¹: "Whatsoever positive order the whole

¹ E. P. vii. v. 3, from Aug. Ep. 108, t. ii. 124.

Church every where doth observe, the same it must needs have received from the very Apostles themselves ; unless, perhaps, some general council were the authors of it.” In this kind no one at all versed in Church history can be at a loss for examples of the benefit which the present Church derives from the chain of primitive tradition. Without its aid, humanly speaking, I do not see how we could now retain either real inward communion with our LORD through his Apostles, or the very outward face of God’s Church and kingdom among us. Not to dwell on disputable cases : how, but by the tradition and practice of the early Church, can we demonstrate the observance of Sunday as the holiest day, or the permanent separation of the clergy from the people as a distinct order ? or where, except in the primitive Liturgies, a main branch of that tradition, can we find assurance that in the Holy Eucharist we consecrate as the Apostles did, and, consequently, that the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of CHRIST, and the bread which we break the communion of the body of CHRIST ¹ ?

¹ Of course, in points of this kind, persons are at liberty, if they will, to content themselves with the common remark, ‘ Some order ‘ must have been adopted, and the Church had a right to adopt which ‘ she pleased.’ It is among the privileges reserved for serious, inquiring piety to discern an express will of God, as well in these ecclesiastical laws, as in others more immediately scriptural.

Whether, then, we look to Discipline, to Interpretation, or to Doctrine, every way we see reason to be thankful for many fragments of apostolical practice and teaching, most needful to guide us in the right use of Holy Scripture.

So it is, however, that either from impatience of authority, or dislike of trouble, or excessive dread of Romish error, tradition has become to most of us an unpalatable word, and we love not to allow that in any sense we rest our faith and practice upon it. And, as commonly happens when the mind is first made up, and reasons are to be found afterwards, objections the most contradictory are brought to justify this our determined disregard of antiquity. Sometimes it is urged that the matters involved are so many, so intricate and various, and demand such minute research, that it is out of the question bringing them within the reach of the great body of the clergy, however learned; sometimes, on the contrary, it is maintained, that the points agreed on in the whole ancient Church are obviously so few, there have been such constant discussions and waverings of opinion, that after all there is no such thing as primitive Catholic tradition; what is called such being merely the register of the dictates of that which has proved, on the whole, the strongest and most fashionable party in the

Church ¹. The one statement makes the field so wide, that it is impossible not to lose one's way in it; the other so contracted, that occupying it is no advantage. It is obvious that both objections cannot stand together; and, as might be expected, the truth lies between the two. On the one hand, we are not to imagine that every usage which has prevailed in any part of the Church, every opinion which has been upheld even among orthodox Fathers, claims to have been part of the system of the Apostles. On the other hand, we cannot surely deny such claim to those rules, in which *all* primitive Councils are uniform, those rites and formularies which are found in *all* primitive Liturgies, and those interpretations and principles of interpretation in which *all* orthodox Fathers agree; more especially when they produce them as undoubted and authoritative. Now the genuine canons of the primitive Councils, and the genuine fragments of the primitive Liturgies, are reducible into a small space; even although we go so low down in both as the division of the Eastern and Western Churches, including the six first Councils general, and excluding image-worship and similar corruptions by authority. As far, therefore, as the Councils and Liturgies are concerned, tracing

¹ See Note (H) in Appendix.

the remnant of apostolical tradition need not prove such a very overwhelming task. To establish consent among the Fathers is doubtless a far more laborious process ; easiest, however, where it is most desirable, viz. in the great points of faith and worship, as recurring continually, and implied in all other discussions. What remains is chiefly interpretation of Scripture ; a precious, inexhaustible mine of primitive knowledge, to such as have the zeal to explore it, but not essential to the fixing of the main outlines. Leaving out, for the present, all such incidental discussions, and confining our view to that which touches the foundation, we shall find that the matters are neither few nor unimportant, which are settled by traditionary evidence within reach of common students. Were they much fewer than they are, and less important, still, as unquestionable relics of the Apostles, a devout and thoughtful mind would prize them for their authors' sake, and for the sake of the lost treasure, whereof they are portions. To forget and disparage them, would be a hard and unnatural thing, like coldly refusing due reverence to the dead. As it is, by the gracious Providence of Almighty God, the points of Catholic consent known by tradition constitute the knots and ties of the whole system ; being such as these : the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, the oblation and

consecration of the Eucharist, the apostolical Succession ; truths and orders soon enumerated, but such as to extend in vital efficacy through every part of the great scheme of the Church. What, then, if the Church in our time, for the sins of Christians, have lost more or less of that good thing, the perfect apostolical body of government, doctrine, and sacramental grace, committed to St. Paul first, and by him to Timothy ? It is not the less our duty, and by God's grace we will regard it as our high privilege, to keep unwearied watch over what remains, and to preserve it, by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us.

3. These concluding words, while they supply an additional reason for extreme jealousy of our precious apostolical relics, open to us the appointed way of guarding what remains, and if one might be so happy, of recovering more : a way not our own, but strictly and properly supernatural. And thus we are conducted to the final point of our enquiry, Whether we, the existing Ministers of the Church, have the same grace dwelling in us, by which Timothy was exhorted to maintain his trust.

Now certainly the obvious meaning of the text is, that the treasure of sound doctrine was to be guarded by the grace of the apostolical succession. For St. Paul speaks of the HOLY GHOST dwelling

in us, i. e. in himself and Timothy ; and how it had passed from him to Timothy had been expressed a few verses before ; “ I will that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.” The Church of England, you will remember, supplies full warrant for this interpretation ; by directing the same phrase to be solemnly repeated at the consecration of every Bishop ; “ Remember that thou stir up the grace of God *which is given thee by this imposition of our hands ;*” and also where, in ordaining a Bishop or Presbyter, the solemn words are spoken, “ Receive the HOLY GHOST.” Our Church, therefore, does not teach us to consider the HOLY GHOST dwelling in St. Paul and Timothy as properly miraculous, a gift of extraordinary grace ; but as their portion of that SPIRIT which was to be poured out on all Apostles, and successors of the Apostles, for ever. It was not what is commonly called miraculous, yet it was altogether supernatural. For no natural or acquired virtue or talent, though it might be called the *gift* of the HOLY GHOST, would ever be designated as the HOLY GHOST himself abiding in a man. Neither was it the preventing or assisting grace, common to all Christian persons ; for it was given to Timothy in particular by imposition of St. Paul’s hands. It could only be, what the Church interprets it ; apostolical, or episcopal grace.

Apostolical, then, or episcopal grace is by God's ordinance the guardian of sound doctrine; the SPIRIT abiding in Timothy is to watch incessantly the deposit or trust of divine truth left in his charge: and where the one, the succession, fails, there, as this verse would lead us to expect, and as all church history proves, the other, the truth of doctrine, is immediately in imminent jeopardy.

Here, then, we seem to have arrived at one cardinal point at least, whereby we may shape our course in times and emergencies more than usually perplexing. We are to look before all things to the integrity of the good deposit, the orthodox faith, the creed of the Apostolical Church, guaranteed to us by Holy Scripture, and by consent of pure antiquity. Present opportunities of doing good; external quietness, peace, and order; a good understanding with the temporal and civil power; the love and co-operation of those committed to our charge;—these, and all other pastoral consolations, must be given up, though it be with a heavy heart, rather than we should yield one jot or one tittle of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

And whereas the dangers to that faith vary according to the differences of times, interests, and opinions; and sometimes the scriptural, sometimes the traditionary safeguards of it appear to

be more immediately threatened ; both must be watched with jealous and impartial care, since comparative neglect of either is sure to be attended with ill consequences to both. Thus the reverence of the Latin Church for tradition, being applied unscrupulously, and without the necessary check from Scripture, to opinions and practices of a date comparatively recent, has led a large portion of Christendom to disuse and contempt, not of Scripture only, but of that real and sure tradition, which they might and ought to have religiously depended upon. On the other hand, is there not reason to fear that the Holy Scriptures themselves are fast losing reverence, through the resolute defiance of tradition, which some affect, in conformity, as they suppose, with the maxim, that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants ? Surely, it is no rare nor unnatural result, if such as are trained to this principle, being left, as some one has said, alone with their Bibles¹, use their supposed liberty of interpretation, first in explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards in lowering or evading the supernatural authority, of the very Scriptures which at first they deferred to exclusively. And no wonder ; since among the traditionary truths which they are taught to undervalue is the canon of Scripture itself, and the principle also, that fundamental articles of

¹ Hooker, E. P. Pref. vii. 7.

belief must be sought for in Scripture. In short, the sacred building is so divinely, though invisibly cemented, that for aught we know it is impossible to remove any portion, either of scriptural or traditional truth, without weakening the whole arch. We, to whom the whole is committed, under the most solemn of all pledges, and with the actual gift of the all-sufficient SPIRIT to aid us in redeeming that pledge ; let us, above all things, beware of the presumption of selecting for ourselves among the truths and laws of the Most High, *which* we will retain, and *which* we may venture to dispense with.

In the next place, let us beware of Novelty : novelty, I mean, as compared with the apostolic age ; not the mere appearance of novelty as compared with the current notions of our time. For it is self-evident, that if in any age or country any portion of apostolical truth be lost, whenever it is revived it must for the time look new ; and its maintainers will have to contend with the prejudice which constantly waits on the disturbers of things established. Not novelty, therefore, relative to us, but novelty relative to the primitive and original standard, is the thing above all to be deprecated in the whole of theology, by whatever plausible air of originality, ingenuity, completeness, it may seem to recommend itself.

Observe under what a fearful penalty, in a

warning parallel to that of the text, St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, discourages every intrusion of speculative doctrine. The apostacy, he tells them, will come ; the wicked one shall be revealed, actuated by Satan, to deceive them that perish ; “ on whom God will send strong delusion, “ that they may believe a lie.” And then he proceeds, “ Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold “ the traditions which ye have been taught, whether “ by word or our epistle.” Is not this equivalent to saying, that whoever is studious of novelty in religion is in a way to take part with Antichrist ; that the only security against him and the spirit which prepares the way for him is to hold the apostolical doctrine, whether taught in word or in writing ; and to exclude all additions, however tempting to human ingenuity and love of system, however acutely they may appear to be reasoned out and to fall in with allowed principles ?

Had this rule been faithfully kept, it would have preserved the Church just as effectually from transubstantiation on the one hand, as from the denial of CHRIST’s real presence on the other hand. The two errors in their original are but rationalism in different forms ; endeavours to explain away, and bring nearer to the human intellect, that which had been left thoroughly mysterious both by Scripture and tradition. They would both turn the attention of men from the real life-giving

miracle to mere metaphysical or grammatical subtilities, such as our Fathers never knew.

Observe, again, the phraseology of the Apostle, how it is formed throughout upon the supposition that in the substance of the faith there is no such thing as improvement, discovery, evolution of new truths ; none of those processes, which are the pride of human reason and knowledge, find any place here. Here the one thing needful is to “*retain* the mystery of the faith ;” to “*abide* in the good instruction whereto we have already attained ;” to “teach no *other* doctrine ;” to be on our guard against those who resist the truth under pretence of “proceeding further,” assured that such, although they seem to be “ever learning,” shall never be able to “come to the knowledge of the truth ;” they will “*proceed*” indeed, but it will be from bad to worse¹. All these cautions, and others no less fearful, the HOLY SPIRIT has left for our admonition, directed not against any positive wrong opinion, but in general against the fatal error of treating theology like any human science, as a subject in which every succeeding age might be expected to advance on the form^{er}².

Nor is the warning less important, nor the application to our times less certain, where

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 9 ; iv. 6 ; i. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 7, 9, 13. Προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι.

² See Appendix, Note (I).

Timothy is enjoined³ to “keep that committed to his charge, turning away from profane, empty verbal discussions, and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called.” The allusion was probably in the first instance to the low-minded empirical system of the Gnostics. But the words are not much less appropriate to that which may be called the *Nominalism* of our days; I mean the habit of resolving the high mysteries of the faith into mere circumstances of language, methods of speaking adapted to our weak understanding, but with no real counterpart in the nature of things. Whoever takes this line must needs hold the tradition of antiquity cheap, since it is based altogether on the supposition which he rejects as unphilosophical. Thus slighting tradition, and explaining away Scripture, there is no saying what pernicious heresy such a theorist may not fall into, if not happily guarded against himself by feelings and prejudices more reasonable than all his reasoning. Meantime the warning of Scripture is express: that they who “profess” such things may be expected to “err concerning the faith.” And it is plain that if at any time either the high places of the Church, or the schools of theological knowledge, should be left in such keeping, the guardians of the good deposit would be bound to

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

direct especial attention that way, and not permit things to pass away, as in a dream, before men are aware.

This leads directly to the recollection of a third danger, to which the Church seems especially exposed at this moment; I mean, that which is commonly entitled *Erastianism*; the Church betraying to the civil power more or less of the good deposit, which our LORD had put exclusively into her hands. This is a form of compromise with the world, for which no occasion was given by the circumstances of the Apostles: a trial peculiar to times like ours, when the governors of the world profess to have become the servants of our LORD and of his CHRIST. We cannot therefore look in the New Testament for literal instruction how to behave with regard to this delicate and dangerous part of our duty. The Gospel affording no express rules or precedents, we are thrown first upon the many analogous cases which the inspired records of the Jewish history supply; and then upon the conduct and determinations of the Catholic Church, in those centuries of her establishment during which the primitive system existed in something like integrity, to guide her demeanour in her altered condition. Yet, undoubtedly, the general rule, Keep the deposit, affects our relations to the civil authorities more immediately than persons unversed in church

matters might imagine. If we are to understand by "the deposit" the faith once for all committed to Christians ; and if the apostolical succession be the appointed guard of that faith ; and if the charter of the succession, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," convey the power of church government as well as that of administering sacraments ; then every undue sacrifice of the power of Church government to any earthly power is an infringement of the charter, and renders the deposit of the faith less secure. For the sake, therefore, of the very foundation of sound doctrine, and not only for the sake of peace and order in the Church, ecclesiastical government, as well as the custody of sacraments, should be jealously reserved in those hands to which CHRIST originally entrusted it. Nor do I see how it can be less than a sacred duty, however painful and to human eyes unavailing, to protest, if we can do no more, against unauthorized intrusions on church government, as every one will readily allow we ought to protest against unauthorized administration of sacraments ¹.

Such being the object for which we are set in defence, and such the enemies with whom we have to contend ; such also the heavenly assistant,

¹ See note (K) in Appendix.

dwelling in us and fighting on our side ; it cannot be hard to perceive with what dispositions we ought to address ourselves to that holy warfare. It will not do to shrink from responsibility, or to be over scrupulous in calculating immediate results. Once let us be reasonably assured that we are in the way of our duty, really keeping the good deposit ; and then, to use the words of the Prophet, we may “set our faces like a flint, and need not be ashamed.” Then, as often as misgivings and alarms come over us, we must “stir up the grace of God which is in us by imposition of apostolic hands.” For “God hath not given us a SPIRIT of cowardice¹, but of power, and of love, and of brotherly correction and reproof² ;” a SPIRIT that brings with Him an invisible but real *power*, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; a SPIRIT of never-failing *love* and *charity* to men’s souls, to guide us in the exercise of that more than human power ; and, lastly, a SPIRIT of kind and fatherly, yet, if need be, uncompromising and fearless *rebuke*.

Let us be only true to our sacred trust ; let us put everything else by for the sake of handing down the whole counsel of God, our good deposit, entire as we received it : and who knows but we

may by God's mercy be made instrumental in saving the English church from ruin not unlike that which has fallen on Ephesus, Smyrna, or Sardis? At any rate, the Church Catholic, in one country or another, we are sure, will survive and triumph. As of old she has stood before kings and governors, and it turned to her for a testimony, so now blessed are they whom divine Providence shall choose and enable worthily to support her cause against popular delusion and tyranny. We, indeed, as Priests of the second order, are but under-labourers in that most holy cause. Yet the least and lowest among us may look for his share of the blessing, as he has undoubtedly his share of the burthen and of the peril. Is there not a hope, that by resolute self-denial and strict and calm fidelity to our ordination vows, we may not only aid in preserving that which remains, but also may help to revive in some measure, in this or some other portion of the Christian world, more of the system and spirit of the apostolical age? New truths, in the proper sense of the word, we neither can nor wish to arrive at. But the monuments of antiquity may disclose to our devout perusal much that will be to this age new, because it has been mislaid or forgotten; and we may attain to a light and clearness, which we now dream not of, in our comprehension of the faith and discipline of CHRIST. We may

succeed beyond what humanly appears possible in rekindling a primitive zeal among those who shall be committed to our charge. Even as Abraham, neglecting all earthly objects, “taught his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;” and one part of his reward was, that “God would not hide from Abraham the thing which he did¹ :” another, that he was made the glorious and favoured instrument for transmitting divine truth through a fallen and corrupt age.

¹ Gen. xviii. 17—19.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A, p. 11.

Philipp. i. 15 — 18. The construction here adopted varies a little from that commonly received. It may be as well, therefore, briefly to state the exact import of it, and the grounds on which it is preferred. It supposes that the words, *κηρύσσειν* and *καταγγέλλειν*, are not used here in their technical or official sense, in which they answer to the English word *preaching*, taken as in our version of the Bible, but that they represent the occasional though providential result of St. Paul's imprisonment having been made the subject of conversation at Rome. Some spoke of it as faithful Christians; others, the Judaizers more especially, as jealous enemies of Christianity: both became in a certain sense heralds of CHRIST, the one sincerely and intentionally speaking the word, as he says just above, the more boldly for his bonds; the other occasionally, without any purpose of their own. Clearly the words will bear this construction. And the ancient interpreters unite in denying the applicability of St. Paul's expressions to heretical teaching. So Tertullian, adv.

Marcion, lib. v. c. 20, having quoted the passage from St. Paul, remarks, that "this was the natural place for excepting to the substance of the preaching complained of, had any variation of that kind been the cause of this great diversity of feeling. But the Apostle states the irregularity to exist in the motives and tempers of men only, not in their standards of mysterious doctrine. His manner of speaking shows, that with whatever purpose they preached, it was one GOD whom they preached, and one CHRIST. 'Therefore,' he adds, 'it is nothing to me, whether in pretence or in truth CHRIST be preached'; because it was still the same who was preached, whether with pretended or with real faithfulness. It was in respect of their good faith in preaching that he used the phrase '*in truth*,' not in respect of the rule of doctrine itself, which they preached. For the rule was all the time one; but some had genuine, *i. e.* simple good faith in delivering it; others were too full of subtilties." Again, it appears that in St. Cyprian's time some had argued from this passage of St. Paul in favour of allowing heretical baptism. St. Cyprian's reply is, "He was not speaking of heretics, nor of their baptism. We cannot show that he has here laid down any rule pertaining thereto. He was speaking of Christians walking, some disorderly, and contrary to Church discipline; some, through fear of GOD, preserving evangelical verity. . . . Now, it is one thing for those within the Church to speak in the name of CHRIST; another thing for those without" (*i. e.* heretics) "to baptize in the name of CHRIST." Ep. ad Jubaian. p. 204, ed. Fell. comp. Firmilian, ad Cyprian. p. 226. See also S. Chrys. *in loco*, who agrees with the preceding Fathers in not interpreting the passage of heretics, but is more express than they in supposing, that it was some sort of formal preaching of which St.

Paul complains. It seems, however, a hard supposition, that any should have literally preached the truth of CHRIST, and exposed themselves to persecution, for the sake of exasperating the emperor against St. Paul. In this, therefore, it may be excusable to depart from St. Chrysostom, and rather to understand *κηρύσσειν* and *καταγγέλλειν*, when applied to the adversaries, in a secondary sense, of the pains taken by them to spread the report of the Apostle's imprisonment, which they considered a check and discredit to the Gospel.

NOTE B, p. 15.

The validity of this conjecture may be best estimated by simply comparing the passage in the original with the preceding and subsequent verses :—

Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοὶ, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

Ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ΘΕΟΥ,

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὧν ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς,

διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ ἈΓΙΟΥ,

οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως, διὰ ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν·

ἵνα, δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι,

κληρονόμοι γενώμεθα κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιωσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσι καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες τῷ ΘΕΩ.

NOTE C, p. 17.

The only other notion of the *παρακαταθήκη*, or apostolical deposit, which can at all approve itself to one versed in Scripture language, is that which would explain it of *persons* rather than of *doctrines*; the flock which was given him, the souls committed to his charge: according to the use of the word in the Acts of the Apostles: “They *commended* their new converts to the LORD on whom they had believed;” and St. Paul “*commended* the Ephesian elders to GOD and the word of his grace.”

But, besides the reasons above given for interpreting the place rather of doctrine, it may be asked whether the very form of expression, Keep the deposit, is such as would have been probably adopted, had pastoral duties been only or chiefly intended. It seems to cast upon the person so admonished rather too much of absolute responsibility, considering that, after all, the success of the pastoral care must depend chiefly on those who are the objects of it. In short, it is a mode of interpreting too much in unison with the overstrained exaggerated demands of our day; in which it has become a general custom to speak as if every thing depended on the personal qualities of the clergy; to blame them altogether for failure, and in consequence to attribute to them over much of the blessings, with which the ALMIGHTY from time to time may be pleased to visit His Church.

NOTE D, p. 24.

Iren. adv. Hær. iii. 4. “Non oportet adhuc quærere apud alios veritatem, quam facile est ab Ecclesia sumere; cum Apostoli, quasi in depositarium dives, plenissime in

eam contulerint omnia quæ sint veritatis: uti omnis, quicumque velit, sumat ex ea potum vitæ. Hæc est enim vitæ introitus; omnes autem reliqui fures sunt et latrones. . . . Quid autem si neque Apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis? Nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesias? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum, eorum qui in CHRISTUM credunt, sine charta vel atramento scriptam habentes per SPIRITUM in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes. . . . Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum, barbari sunt; quantum autem ad sententiam, et consuetudinem, et conversationem, propter fidem perquam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, conversantes in omni iustitia et castitate et sapientia. Quibus si aliquis annuntiaverit ea quæ ab hæreticis adinventa sunt, proprio sermone eorum colloquens, statim concludentes aures, longo longius fugient, ne audire quidem sustinentes blasphemum colloquium."

NOTE E, p. 29.

This is not said without recollection of such texts as St. John v. 49; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. But it is plain that both these passages speak of the *Scriptures of the Old Testament only*; and therefore, if understood exclusively, prove too much. The latter, indeed, adds a general remark on the use of *all* Scripture; that being, as it is, all alike divinely inspired, every part of it has its use, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and must help to the perfection and entire furnishing of the man of God unto all good works. But St. Paul does not there affirm that all truths

necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, any more than he affirms all to be contained in each separate portion of Scripture.

These being the passages commonly adduced to prove by Scripture the sufficiency of Scripture, and being evidently inadequate to the purpose, we cannot be very wrong in rather referring to Tradition, as for the Sacred Canon itself, so also for this rule concerning it; That it contains or implies whatever points of faith are necessary to eternal salvation.

NOTE F, p. 31.

Not to travel at present beyond the writings of Irenæus himself, the following might be cited as passages clearly implying this doctrine. In b. ii. c. 46, he thus lays down the rule to be adopted in interpreting Scripture parables:—"A sound, and safe, and religious mind, and one really bent on truth:—whatsoever things God has left within our province, and subjected to our knowledge, those such a mind will diligently study to the uttermost, and in the same continually advance, by daily exercise rendering the acquisition of knowledge easy to itself. Now these things are, first, such as come under the cognizance of our sight; secondly, whatsoever things are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of the Divine Scriptures. And therefore the parables, or dark passages, ought always to be expounded consistently with those which are clear." Is it not plain that Irenæus is here dividing the grounds of human knowledge into two classes, the one of Sight and the other of Faith; and that his definition of the latter is, "such things as are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of Divine Scrip-

ture"? Presently after, he compares those who leave express Scripture for doubtful and fanciful theories of figurative language, to the foolish virgins, who "being freely and in plain terms invited to meet the bridegroom, lose their opportunity, and are shut out of the marriage feast, while they are seeking light from those who busy themselves in the dark with forced explanations of parables." Again, in the very passage above quoted, p. 24, where he speaks most highly of real apostolical tradition, he clearly intimates that the Scriptures are parallel to it in substance. The mere question, If we had not the Scriptures, must we not follow tradition? implies that, having the Scriptures, we have the substance of truths necessary to salvation, and so far depend not at all on tradition. The manner, again, in which Irenæus every where opposes the heretics to the Scriptures, evinces that they were constantly and unhesitatingly appealed to by the orthodox, as the foundation, without going further. E. g. lib. ii. c. 54. "These are not fitter guides than the Scriptures; nor does it become us, leaving the writings of the LORD and Moses, and the other prophets, heralds of the truth, to rest our faith on these, whose teaching has nothing sound, but is full of distraction and incoherency."

NOTE G, p. 35.

The following is the statement of St. Athanasius; de Decr. Nic. Synod. c. iii.: t. i. 210. ed. Bened:

Ὡς ἐφιλονείκουν ἀσεβοῦντες, καὶ θεομαχεῖν ἐπεχείρουν, τὰ μὲν λεγόμενα παρ' αὐτῶν ἀσεβείας ἦν μεστά· οἱ δὲ συνελθόντες ἐπίσκοποι· ἦσαν δὲ πλεον ἢ ἑλασσον τριακόσιοι· πρῶως καὶ φιλανθρωπῶς ἀπήτουν αὐτοὺς, περὶ ὧν

ἔλεγον διδόναι λόγον καὶ ἀποδείξεις εὐσεβεῖς. ὥς δὲ καὶ μόνον φθεγγόμενοι κατεγινώσκοντο, καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διεμάχοντο, πολλὴν ὀρῶντες τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰρέσεως τὴν ἀπορίαν, ἀχανεῖς μὲν ἔμενον οὗτοι, καὶ διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς ὁμολογουν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ κακοδοξίᾳ αὐτῶν αἰσχύνην· οἱ τοίνυν ἐπίσκοποι λοιπὸν ἀνελόντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπινοηθέντα ῥήματα, οὕτως ἐξέθεντο κατ' αὐτῶν τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὴν πίστιν.

“The Arians being forward in their impiety, and taking the offensive, and uttering words full of ungodliness, the Bishops who had assembled, being in number three hundred, more or less, quietly asked of them to give some explanation and proof of their affirmations, consistent with piety. But when upon their own shewing they were convicted, and were at variance with each other, finding themselves much at a loss in maintaining their heresy, the result was, on the one part, silence, and an implied confession of shame for their perverse opinion; on the other, the Bishops rejected the expressions devised by them, and proceeded to enunciate against them the sound faith, *the faith of the Church from the beginning.*”

The orthodox therefore at Nice argued indeed largely from Scripture, but it was in refutation of the Arian subtilities, rather than for establishment of the Catholic faith. For the latter purpose, they were content to appeal to tradition.

NOTE H, p. 40.

Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants*, c. vii. p. 1. s. 56. “The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Whatever else they believe besides

it, and the plain irrefragable indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion : but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, *Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age ; traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found. No tradition but only of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering men to build upon.*" It is melancholy, but instructive, to reflect that the writer of these sentences is credibly reported to have been an Arian, or near it, before he died.

NOTE I, p. 48.

The sort of improvement which we are encouraged to hope for, is traced out by Vincentius Lirinensis, Commonitor. c. 22:—“ O Timothee, O sacerdos, O tractator, O doctor, si te divinum munus idoneum fecerit, ingenio, exercitatione, doctrina, esto spiritalis tabernaculi Bezaleel, pretiosas divini dogmatis gemmas exsculpe, fide-

liter coapta, adorna sapienter, adjice splendorem, gratiam, venustatem. Intelligatur te exponente illustrius quod ante obscurius credebatur. Per te posteritas intellectum gratuletur, quod ante vetustas non intellectum venerabatur. Eadem tamen quæ didicisti doce; ut cum dicas nove, non dicas nova." Compare Bp. Butler, Anal. part ii. c. iii. vol. ii. p. 249. Oxford, 1807.

NOTE K, p. 51.

This part of the argument can hardly be stated, under the present circumstances of our Church, without giving rise to the grave practical question, What is the line to be taken by those clergymen, who feel serious objections, in conscience and principle, to the course of ecclesiastical legislation now in progress: who consider our Saviour's charter to be violated by the admission of a body constituted as the British Parliament now is to legislate for the Church of Christ, especially without controul or authority from the Bishops synodically assembled? Under such persuasion, can we help regarding the laws so passed, or hereafter to be passed, as having in themselves no canonical force, and only then claiming the submission of CHRIST'S ministers and people, when enforced on us severally by command of our respective diocesans? Or can we avoid entertaining fears, that the whole may amount in God's sight to the concurrence of the Church in a great national sin? All this, over and above the many grave exceptions which, as not a few of us think, may reasonably be alleged against the *details* of the proposed reform, can it be wrong to take such opportunities as we have of respectfully recording our humble but

deliberate protest against proceedings, in our judgment so very objectionable?

The present writer is well aware of the insignificance of such expressions of individual opinion; and also of the danger of appearing undutiful to those whom he is bound most on earth to honour and revere. But he has observed in several quarters a disposition to interpret the silence of the parochial clergy as implying approbation of the measures in question: and he fears that such supposed acquiescence may tend to neutralize our efforts on future occasions. These feelings, he hopes, may plead his excuse for being anxious to disavow on his own behalf, and as far as he may venture to do so, on behalf of the clergy in general, all responsibility on the subject. The principles on which we might well be supposed averse to the course which has been adopted were sufficiently manifested three years ago in our remonstrances against the Irish Church Bill. Whatever has been now done, for good or for evil, the praise or blame of it must belong entirely to our governors. Our part has been merely that of soldiers, laying down their arms at the command of their superior officers. Nor can it in fairness be so construed as to preclude us hereafter from asserting church principles, as often as we feel that our duty calls on us to do so.

THE END.

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